

Spirit-Filled Pastor: Marvel's Dr. Strange Created in Likeness of Prominent 1900s Occult Leader

Joe Schimmel enjoyed watching the first two Spider-Man movies with his kids, but as he watched more superhero movies, he noticed that elements of occultism were slowly becoming more prominent. He also noticed that characters who seemed to represent God were “portrayed to be evil,” while characters who practiced witchcraft were painted as good.

After discerning that something was a little bit off about Marvel movies, Schimmel decided to research Marvel and its ties to the occult. What he found at the bottom of all of it was an early 1900s British occultist named Aleister Crowley.

Crowley was a prolific writer during his time and a self-proclaimed prophet who taught others how to use sexual immorality to perform magic rituals and how to become proficient at the arts by contacting demonic entities. Schimmel was already thoroughly acquainted with Crowley's work because of research he had done for one of his first films, *They Sold Their Souls for Rock and Roll*. In his research, he found Crowley's work had influenced many famous bands, including Led Zeppelin, David Bowie, The Beatles, and Ozzy Osbourne.

The similarities between Crowley and Dr. Strange seemed unmistakable to Schimmel. He explains it like this: “If I have two different people in this room,” he says, “a follower of Aleister Crowley and a guy that's really into Dr. Strange, and I started to describe [either Crowley or Strange], and I asked who I'm describing ... [the follower of Crowley] would say

Crowley. The [Dr. Strange fan] would say Strange.”

Schimmel references multiple similarities between the two. For example, Dr. Strange’s original character in the comics and Aleister Crowley were both British. They were both magicians. They both merged Western occultism and Eastern mysticism. And they both journeyed to the Himalayas.

Schimmel knows that many of these could be coincidences, so he dives in deeper. Crowley called his lair where practiced magic his “sanctum sanctorum.” Dr. Strange casts spells in his sanctum sanctorum. Crowley used the all-seeing eye of Horus in his incantations. Strange uses the all-seeing eye of Agamotto. Crowley had a Scarlet Woman. In the new movie, Dr. Strange works with the Scarlet Witch. Dr. Strange’s original look was even modeled after Crowley’s appearance.

The first time Dr. Strange’s character appeared in a comic, he was introduced as “Dr. Strange: Master of Black Magic.”

As Schimmel kept digging through these remarkable similarities between Strange and Crowley, he investigated the beliefs of the top comic writers. Stephen Englehart, the main writer for Dr. Strange comics in the 1970s, was a member of the Order Templi Orientis, an occult group that continues Crowley’s practice of black magic. Englehart joined the group to learn magic so it could influence his writings.

Crowley’s writings not only influenced Englehart but they also influenced other top comic book writers like Grant Morrison and Alan Moore. Under Moore’s home he keeps a large image of a demonic God. “Through worshipping these entities and practicing Crowley’s magic, he got in touch with a spirit of the visual arts,” says Schimmel. “And it’s through working with these entities that he’s become this incredible writer.”

These might seem like three isolated comic book writers, but Schimmel’s research suggests otherwise. “In the top 10 writers for Marvel and DC, every one of them promotes the occult in

one way or another,” Schimmel says. “Almost all of them promoted Aleister Crowley in some way.”

Schimmel doesn't like to depend on his own theories to prove the links between the occult and these writers. He relies on their own words to show how deep the ties between Crowley and the comic book industry go. “We've got the footnotes,” Schimmel says about the evidence. “We do a scholarly job. We're able to quote these guys left and right.”

Schimmel didn't research any of this to cause fear or incite a “satanic panic.” He just believes too many Christians have let their guard down concerning the occult, and it's now such a regular part of our entertainment that we've become desensitized to it. “We live in a post-Christian era ... and have accepted an occult worldview,” says Schimmel. “A lot of that's been the conditioning that's gone on through Disney.”

Disney now owns Marvel, and its latest PG-13 superhero movie, *Dr. Strange in the Multiverse of Madness*, recently debuted in theaters. Many reviewers praised it and acknowledged that it looks less like a superhero movie and more like a horror movie.

As far as entertainment, Schimmel encourages Christians, “I think the bottom line is test everything, and hold fast to that which is good.” He continues, “We're not supposed to be conformed to the world, but [the Bible] says, ‘Be transformed by the renewing of [our minds]’ (Rom. 12:2, NIV) and preach the truth.” {eoa}

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